



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Southeast Region Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Related Requirements.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0544.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular (revision and extension of a currently approved information collection).

Number of Respondents: 927.

Average Hours Per Response: Installation, 5 hours; installation and activation checklist, 20 minutes; power-down exemption requests, 5 minutes; transmission of fishing activity reports, 1 minute; and annual maintenance, 2 hours.

Burden Hours: 2,557.

Needs and Uses: This request is for revision and extension of a currently approved

information collection.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act authorizes the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) to prepare and amend fishery management plans for any fishery in Federal waters under their respective jurisdictions. NMFS and the Gulf Council manage the reef fish fishery in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) under the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). NMFS and the South Atlantic Council manage the fishery for rock shrimp in the South Atlantic under the Shrimp FMP. The vessel monitoring system (VMS) regulations for the Gulf reef fish fishery and the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery may be found at 50 CFR §§ 622.28 and 622.205, respectively.

The FMPs contains several area-specific regulations where fishing is restricted or prohibited in order to protect habitat or spawning aggregations, or to control fishing pressure. Unlike size, bag, and trip limits, where the catch can be monitored on shore when a vessel returns to port, area restrictions require at-sea enforcement. However, at-sea enforcement of offshore area restrictions is difficult due to the distance from shore and the limited number of patrol vessels, resulting in a need to improve enforceability of area fishing restrictions through remote sensing methods. In addition, all fishing gears are subject to some area fishing restrictions. Because of the sizes of these areas and the distances from shore, the effectiveness of enforcement through over flights and at-sea interception is limited. An electronic VMS allows a more effective means to monitor vessels for intrusions into restricted areas.

The VMS provides effort data and significantly aids in enforcement of areas closed to

fishing. All position reports are treated in accordance with NMFS existing guidelines for confidential data. As a condition of authorized fishing for or possession of reef fish or rock shrimp in or from the Gulf exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or South Atlantic EEZ, respectively, vessel owners or operators subject to VMS requirements must allow NMFS, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and their authorized officers and designees, access to the vessel's position data obtained from the VMS.

NMFS would like to move the collection of information requirement for VMS applicable to vessels with limited access endorsements for South Atlantic rock shrimp under OMB Control No. 0648-0205 to this collection. The burden estimates have changed due to inclusion of the applicable burden from OMB Control No. 0648-0205.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations; individuals or households.

Frequency: One time, annually and on occasion.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Dated: November 16, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

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